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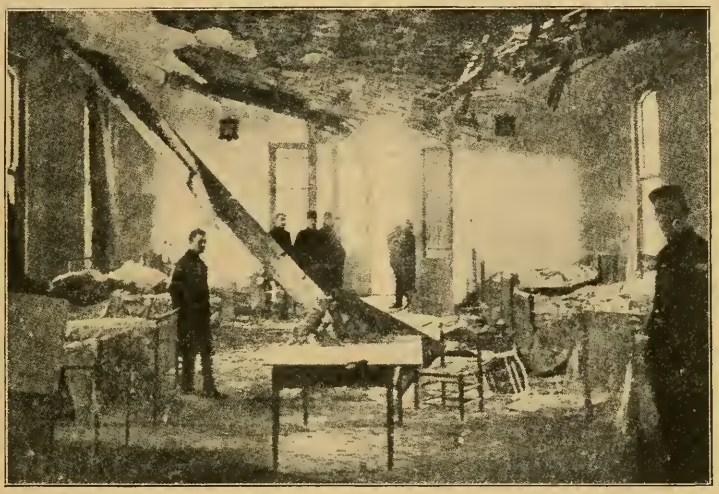
THE WAR AND WORLD OPINION

By WILLIAM H. JOHNSON
Professor of Latin in Denison University



HOSPITAL OF LIERRE, BOMBARDED BY GERMANS, SEPT. 29, 1914

"The ruins of churches, of hospitals, of the Louvain Library, and other places and objects held sacred from the ravages of war by all right-thinking men, picture not so vividly the crushing outward power of German 'efficiency' as its blighting inward devastation of the noblest traits of the German spirit itself, when actuated by ideals out of harmony with the upward trend of liberty and humanity." (Page 30.)

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The cut of the Hospital of Lierre, Belgium, which appears on the cover, is taken from Henri Davignon's BELGIUM AND GERMANY, *English edition, page 46.*

W. H. JOHNSON

APR -7 1916

FOREWORD

The European war is no breakdown of Christianity, as some have called it. With all its horrors, its progress has been a quickening influence to the faith of millions, however imperfect and misguided that faith may be in many who sincerely feel it, however adverse to Christian ideals the ambition that brought on the war, and however inconsistent with Christian teaching some of the hitherto unknown methods by which it has been waged

Neither does it mark the breakdown of international civilization. Individual nations will continue to live in their individual capacity, and to make engagements with one another; and the necessity of holding such agreements sacred will be all the more deeply felt because of the sad lesson which the violation of her Belgian agreements by Germany has taught to the world as to the intolerable results of such violations.

Nor yet does the war signal the death of the movement towards arbitration as a substitute for war in the settlement of international difficulties, thus opening the way towards final disarmament. Outside the domination of the Prussian school, represented in literature by the von Treitschkes and von Bernhardis, and in action by the German and Austrian governments, militarism is a dying cause, and the billions now being spent by Russia, England, France and Italy, with the countless ship-loads of war munitions crossing the seas from this country, are all effective contributions to its death.

Least of all is the war a gigantic "riot," as it has been called by William J. Bryan, who rivals Henry Ford among a certain class of peace advocates in his inability to realize the deeper world issues of the conflict and to appreciate the true nature of the moral duty

which it imposes upon the great American republic,—the duty to stand firmly at the head of the neutral world, *at whatever cost,* for those principles of liberty, justice, humanity and progress endangered by the war. For in its larger, worldwide meaning, the war is simply an attack, in the interest of Prussian dynastic ambitions, upon those principles of liberty, justice, humanity and progress which lie at the very foundations of Christian civilization.

If there be excuse for another pamphlet on this war, it lies not in any authority attaching to the name of the writer, but only in his desire to keep vigorously alive for future use that intense interest and splendid moral feeling which burst forth so spontaneously at the outbreak of the war, for the perishing of this would be the one thing capable of turning the struggle into an unmitigated calamity, no matter which side should emerge with external success.

W. H. JOHNSON.

GRANVILLE, OHIO, March 30, 1916.

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THE WAR AND WORLD OPINION

I. The Immediate Reaction

From an editorial in the New York *Independent,* of January 17, 1916, are taken the following words:

"When the European War began, American reaction to the situation was instantaneous and tremendous. On every hand the remark was heard that American feeling had never been so nearly unanimous as it was in holding Germany blameworthy for the appalling catastrophe."

The memory of every reader will bear witness to the truth of this statement, and much might have been added to it without exaggeration. Attention might have been called to the fact that this tremendous reaction was notably moral in its character, lifting great masses of men to a moral height on the subject of international rights and duties such as they had never before consciously occupied. And it might also have been stated that this uplifting moral thrill was not confined to the United States of America. Just as spontaneously it manifested itself throughout the neutral world, giving birth to an aggregate of deeply felt and forcefully stated moral sentiment such as mankind had never previously beheld. One cannot attempt by quotation, within the limits of these few pages, to convey any adequate idea of this world-wide flood of condemnatory judgment and feeling. It would be a matter of volumes, not of paragraphs, to give even a fairly representative selection from the columns of stern reproach which poured forth in many languages, from the presses of many lands, as a startled world realized just what was the meaning of Germany's action during those fateful days of July and the beginning of August, in the summer of 1914.

II. Not A Verdict of Prejudice

Germany could hardly have expected positive approval of her course from the world outside, but she was not prepared for such unanimity and emphasis of condemnation. An immediate defence seemed to be called for, and the one hazarded in the hurry of the moment was very unfortunate in its bearing on her reputation either for sincerity or for good judgment. The world was told that it was allowing itself to be blinded by its own anti-German prejudice and by "British lies," the latter rendered easier by the fact that German access to outside news channels was at once impeded through the cutting of cables. Sober thinking before speaking would hardly have permitted such an explanation. It was a plea doomed to failure both from its ignoring of facts and from its ruthless insult to the intelligence of the peoples to whom it was directed. For Germany thus to challenge the mental capacity of the neutral world to draw a fair and just conclusion from the events passing before its eyes was comparable only to the attitude of the man who goes staggering along the street insisting that everybody else is reeling drunk.

In the United States, the largest of all the neutral countries and the one in which condemnation of the German position had perhaps the most emphatic and general expression, the charge of such an antecedent prejudice against Germany as to have swung public sentiment unreasoningly to the side of England is absurd. A fairly wide acquaintance with the trend of American newspaper literature during this generation can but prove to anyone that as between the two countries in question expressions of prejudice against England have been far more numerous and more widely distributed than against Germany. But on either side such expressions of prejudice have been in general nothing but insincere ranting, indulged in for its supposed political effect upon certain classes of imperfectly Americanized voters. It has neither emanated from

nor influenced the bulk of thoughtful men and women who have determined the cast of American sentiment in the present crisis. Let him who alleges a dominant anti-German prejudice among us recall the hosts of Germans chosen to office by American voters annually all over our land and then say no more. No, we cannot oblige Germany by the admission that we are a nation of prejudiced mental incompetents, and so far as our opinions concerning the outbreak of the war are based upon British statements at all, those statements have only been strengthened by the accumulation of further evidence as the months have gone by. With ample time and opportunity to get her side before the world, untouched by the British censor, Germany's appeal for a reversal of the verdict has been in vain.

III. A Hopeless Conflict With International Civilization

One sees varying opinions expressed as to the immediate *cause* of the war, but features of its *conduct* by Germany and her allies have left the question of cause in a position of comparative unimportance. The initial act of warfare was the forcible entrance of Germany into Belgian territory, the integrity and neutrality of which she was under specific pledge to protect, both by her own treaty engagements and by her participation in international guarantees to the same effect. The insulting proposal was made to Belgium that she sit still and allow her territory to be used as the medium of a war upon her friends, the French, money payment to be made afterwards for material damage done in passing through. Rather than accept this vile stain upon her honor, she faced an inevitable temporary ruin and resisted with all the strength at her command. To the hot heads then in charge at Berlin, this may have seemed only a matter of a few days delay. To the outside world, the deep significance of this wanton destruction of Belgian neutrality was immediately apparent. The well informed were aware that a school of militarist statesmen and writers in Ger-

many had been building up a theory that national ambition need be troubled by no restraints aside from limits in the physical efficiency of the tools at its command; or, in the simpler if more brutal words of the old maxim of lawlessness in all ages, *Might makes Right.* In the violation of Belgium was the overwhelming and unimpeachable evidence that the Kaiser and his associates had taken this emblem of lawlessness as their own, to back it up with the full strength of the greatest military establishment which any nation on earth had ever devised. Germany had defiantly declared her own arbitrary will to be superior not only to her own specific pledges of the past but to the whole structure of international law. Now any man who stops to think will realize at once that good faith in the keeping of treaties, and a rigid regard for the binding force of international law, are the very foundation stones of international civilization. Let every other nation show the same disregard for these principles which Germany displayed in the violation of Belgium, and has been displaying in certain features of her submarine warfare, and international civilization would at once be set back into the chaos of the Middle Ages. And it is the realization of this truth, among those who really think the matter through, that accounts for the widespread feeling that a German victory in the present war would be a worldwide disaster, entirely apart from its relation to the countries immediately involved. For it would mean that international law would be rewritten under the domination of a power to which any single one of its provisions would be a "mere scrap of paper" if at any time found to be in conflict with its own national ambitions. The individual state can exist only if the will of the individual citizen shall bend sufficiently to safeguard the interests of all. "But for centuries past," to quote from words used in a letter to *The Nation* a few months ago, "there has been coming into ever stronger life a state more comprehensive than any that ever before existed—the civilized world itself.

Feeling its way slowly, it has built up a code of law based in principle on the fundamental postulates of justice and humanity, and in practice on the general consent of individual nations to submit to a few restrictions on arbitrary power in return for a more orderly progress of civilization, which experience has shown to be well worth the sacrifice."

And if a realization of these truths has implanted so widely in the neutral world the conviction that a German victory in the present state of the official German mind would be a world disaster, it has also implanted in the minds and hearts of the nations against which Germany is fighting an attitude which makes a final German victory impossible. In the early months of the war there was much speculation as to the possibility of some one of the allies breaking the combination and making a separate peace with Germany on the best terms possible, thus leaving Germany free for a virtually certain victory over the others. There has been some evidence that Germany herself had hopes of such an outcome. But on the day when Germany contemptuously repudiated her own treaty obligations by crushing Belgium, her power to make a separate peace with any of the Allies was also crushed beyond repair. Did "military necessity," self-determined in the council chamber at Berlin, justify the sudden repudiation of treaty obligations to Belgium? If that be German logic and morality, then what would a separate treaty with Russia, or France, or England be worth in the face of some other self-determined "military necessity" which might arise at any moment after the rest of the Allies should be conquered? He must be blind indeed who cannot see why it is that any break between England, France and Russia is wholly out of the question. And Italy, the long hesitating member of the alliance, must be blind indeed if she does not see that any break in the combination would be ruinous to her. And since the alliance cannot be broken, and the Allies possess an ample surplus of men and means

finally to wear out the utmost efforts that even boasted German physical efficiency can bring to bear against them, the victory of the Allies is only a matter of time. A German victory against the forces which she had challenged was improbable enough in any case. When she began the struggle by defiantly flouting her own treaty obligations, that improbability became an impossibility through her own action. It is the reasoned conviction of the world in general that no satisfactory human progress would be possible without a due regard on the part of all nations for the sacredness of international obligations. Shake off from Germany the incubus of von Bernhardi militarists and Prussian dynastic ambitions and the same conviction will find ready acceptance with the Germans themselves. No nation can successfully stem the main trend of international progress. To quote from *The Nation* again, "For Germany to conquer now, in a struggle of this nature, would be merely to throw a temporary dam across the current of civilization, herself below. And with all her boasted efficiency she can mix no concrete for a dam of that kind which will not crumble disastrously over her head in the near future. It is in the very nature of modern civilization that in such a contest the arbitrary will of the recalcitrant nation *must* give way to the permanent good of all nations, which demands the sacredness of international law against any individually determined 'military necessity' whatever."

IV. An Unfruitful Frightfulness

Lawlessness and inhumanity are twin brothers of the same ill-favored brood. The illicit raid into Belgium was stained—no, you cannot *stain* a thing that is *all* stain—was attended within a few days by the dropping of bombs from the air among the women and children and other non-combatants of the city of Antwerp. The readers of these words are only too sadly aware of the similar senseless slaughter wrought by Zeppelin raids over the non-combatant population of Paris, London and other cities and towns,—senseless,

because no one of these raids, nor the whole of them, has brought the German arms one whit nearer even to a local victory within the area where innocent lives have been so brutally taken. Have not the Allies used air-craft for carrying bombs too, do you ask? Yes, but their aim has been consistently to strike at railway junctions, ammunition factories, depots of supplies, submarine and Zeppelin stations, and other spots of distinctively military character and importance. For this reason the killing of women and children by their bombs has been the rare exception, while in the Zeppelin raids of Germany over the territory of the Allies the number of women and children killed has regularly been far more than that of men. And this is entirely in harmony with theories deliberately taught by the type of militarist philosophers now dominant over the minds of those who are responsible for German policy. Make war on all the resources of your opponent, mental as well as material, they say, and make it as drastic and frightful as possible. Over this offensive dose is spread the sugar coating of the claim that thus the opponent will be obliged the more quickly to give up, and so life will actually be saved in the end. To have believed this before the trial shows an amazing lack of insight into human nature; to believe it now betrays an even more astonishing lack of information. According to the stupid militarist psychology of Berlin, the demonstration that any woman or child in any city or hamlet of England or France was liable to be blown to pieces by a bomb from the air should have led the non-combatant population to an overwhelming demand for an end of the war, through submission to Germany. In strict accord with traits of human nature of which most thinking people outside of Germany are certainly aware, the Zeppelin brutalities simply stimulated enlistments in the Allied armies and deepened the determination of the whole population, women and men alike, that nothing should be thought of short of pushing the war to an absolute victory. Germany's intro-

duction of poisonous gases is but another illustration of her clash with the humane feeling and tendencies of modern civilization, tempered a little by the fact that the device has been used only against actual opponents in the field, but an essential reaction towards the brutality of a less enlightened age, all the same. And the official state of mind which could plan and order the Zeppelin raids upon women and children, and the use of poisonous gases, goes a long way to explain the cruelties wreaked upon the non-combatant population of Belgium. One is aware, of course, of the heated denials of these atrocities given out from Berlin; but the verdict which will count with the world at large is that which bears the signature of James Bryce, whose reputation for careful investigation and rigid honesty would no more have been questioned in Berlin or Vienna than in London or Boston, up to the time when the war began. It must be remembered that no verdict against Germany on the question of these atrocities was required to save the honor of England, or of British troops. If the evidence had so indicated, Lord Bryce and his committee of investigation could have reported that the charges were not sustained without bringing any unpleasant results upon themselves, or any reproach upon their country more formidable than that of too great a readiness to accept damaging accusations against their enemies. But after examining hundreds of witnesses, and throwing out large quantities of testimony that was uncorroborated, the committee was compelled to report that it had found ample and conclusive evidence of widespread atrocities of such a nature and under such official sanction as to remove them entirely from the category of the sporadic outrages unavoidable in any war, on either side. Lord Bryce's report, with a sadly large supplementary volume of the terrible evidence on which it is based, may be had through any book seller. To read it is a nerve-harrowing but tremendously impressive experience. Can any man or woman whose heart and soul and mind are not wholly

dominated by the ideals of Prussian militarism read it through without coming to the unalterable conviction that any treaty of peace which does not provide for the restoration of Belgian independence, with all possible material restitution from Germany, would be a travesty on justice, a dishonor to any nation participating in its negotiation or profiting by its provisions, and a fertile seed-bed for further war? By any conceivable success at arms in this struggle, what could Germany have gained which her truest minds would not one day be glad to exchange for the privilege of having the Bryce report removed from the world's libraries and irrevocably forgotten! It is not the truthful historian, however—he is a mere recorder—but the men responsible for the conduct of the German government itself who have written this black page into the history of the Hohenzollern dynasty. As far as *they* are concerned, the judgment of the outside world says today, and will continue to say:

"The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out one word of it."

With the German *people,* as distinguished from the group about the Imperial head, the future will be more lenient. The stain of the ruin of Belgium was not of their planning, and although they have been led through the excitement of war into at least a formal approval of it, the outside world is charitable enough to believe that it could never have happened if the structure of the German government had been such as to stimulate an independent popular opinion and give it any effective means of control. One of the saddest features of the whole catastrophe is the spectacle of a great people, capable of the very highest mental and moral achievements, allowing its popular opinion to be fettered, drugged, and prostituted to the outworn militaristic ideals of a medieval minded dynasty. So unnatural a strain will yet produce a break. If there is a

future for Germany it is not for the reactionary empire of today, but for a free and self-governing German people, their Hohenzollern dynasty with its von Bernhardi ideals and its philosophy of frightfulness thrown gladly into the ever accumulating dump-heap of the follies of the past.

V. The Lusitania and Neutral Sea Rights

The warnings given out before the last sailing of the Lusitania were nowhere seriously considered. The reason is simple. Even the horrors of Belgium had not convinced the world at large that the German war lords were capable of so black a crime as the torpedoing without warning of a great passenger steamer, known to be carrying hundreds of non-combatants, a goodly proportion of them women and children, and more than a hundred of them citizens of a country with which Germany was at peace. If a month before this occurred any American opponent of Germany had publicly asserted that the Kaiser and his advisers were capable of such a deed, the charge would have been resented as slanderous by nine-tenths of our Americans of German extraction. The news that so foul a deed had actually been done filled even so vigorous a pro-German as Herman Ridder with astonishment and dismay, and for a brief time he trembled on the verge of a genuine Americanism, asserting that President Wilson had but to speak and he and others of his class would stand by him to the utmost. If he had but held to these noble words, he could unquestionably have carried a large portion of our German-American element with him, the policy of Germany herself would have been materially altered, and his last days would have been brightened by the consciousness that he had rendered a real service to humanity, greatly reducing the probability of armed strife between the two countries that so painfully distracted his allegiance. But maligner counsels prevailed, both with him and with others, and the crime of the Lusitania has been again

and again repeated, with no variation except in the number of non-combatants lawlessly and brutally slain. And what defence has Germany put forth for such action? Nothing whatever that does not readily reduce to the utterly inadmissible claim that on the score of a self-determined "military necessity" she may set at naught the admitted principles of international law, based on the dictates of humanity, and at one stroke carry the methods of warfare back into the barbarism of the Middle Ages. And the right of one nation to do just that is what some misguided "pacifists," and other "American citizens" whose real heart allegiance centers in Berlin, and still other grovelers after the votes of this second class, have been trying to persuade the President of the United States to concede! Short-sighted indeed is the "pacifist" who imagines that the settled peace for which everyone but the real militarist longs could be promoted by a concession which would immediately move the hands of the clock of humane progress straight back, and far back, toward the military methods of a past whose dominating influences neither knew nor cared for peace. It is hard to apply any more respectful name than maudlin nonsense to letters which are continually appearing in our papers alleging that the President, in the diplomatic contest with Germany growing out of her submarine policy, is contending for nothing more than the mere personal convenience of a class of foolhardy adventurers who would risk the peace and safety of their country from no higher motive than the mere spirit of bravado. To hurl such a charge at the six score Americans of all classes, of both sexes, and of all ages, who were slaughtered on the Lusitania, or at the American women and children of Italian birth who were done to death on their way back to their American homes on the Ancona, or at the American consular officer slain on his way to his official post on the Persia,—to call these people foolhardly triflers with their country's peace and safety, is not merely false, but is brutally slanderous as well.

The man who can repeat such a charge, after giving any real thought to the immediate facts and to the history of the international right involved, is in sore need of a tonic both to his intellect and to his morals. President Wilson's letter to Senator Stone, asserting his invincible determination to stand firmly by the traditional rights of neutral travelers on the high sea, may seem to some to bring danger of armed conflict. Such an outcome is of course within the limit of possibility; but on that score alone he is correct in the conviction that far more danger, both near and remote, would lie in the base surrender of those rights in the face of lawless threats.

VI. Rewriting International Law

But we are told by Germany and her apologists, as well as by a few abstract theorists whom the deeper moral issues of the present crisis in the world's history seem powerless to penetrate, that the invention of the submarine and the Zeppelin have so revolutionized warfare as *ipso facto* to annul existing laws of war. If the heretofore existing laws of war do not provide for the dropping of bombs from Zeppelins among women and babies, or for the destruction of merchant vessels from under water without the serious inconvenience of providing for preservation of the lives of non-combatants and neutrals who have the legal right to be on board, then the laws of war are manifestly defective and must be redrawn! And so Germany proposes to declare them annulled on her own motion, and to rewrite them at once on lines in harmony with her own immediate desires. It should not be necessary to say to any reasonable person that the question whether an agreement between nations is outgrown or not can be decided only by those nations acting in concert, not by any one of them separately. If the law of nations concerning warfare is rewritten in any essential respect at the close of this war, it will be rewritten in accordance with the united judgment of the civilized nations of the world, not with the self-determined "military

necessities" of some one among them. The United States will have a large influence in that rewriting if it occurs, and for what ends shall that influence be used? To "make a place" for new inventions of destruction which are hampered by present regulations devised for the safety of the lives of non-combatants? Who that knows the larger trend of modern times from barbarism towards humanity, from absolutism towards democracy, can imagine the United States playing such a role in a conclave of the nations? Who that has a mind and soul in harmony with that trend towards humanity could wish it to do so? No, the international law of the future, seeking to mitigate the horrors of war at every point possible and to pave the way for its final elimination, will sacrifice no existing human right whatever to submarine or Zeppelin or any new engine of destruction, but will confine them one and all to a bona fide defensive or offensive use against the armed forces and purely military agencies of the enemy. The kindlier instincts are too prevalent in the modern world, the democratic recognition of the value of the life of the ordinary citizen and his wife and children is too general, to admit of the substitution of "schrecklichkeit" for humanity as the end towards which the customs of warfare must be developed. To this sentiment Bryan himself would at once give assent; but to the realization of such an aim the one thing absolutely necessary now is the loyal and vigorous support of the President in his resistance to the one nation which is today doing its best to force the world in the opposite direction.

VII. England and Germany; A Moral Contrast

The purely selfish motive which has led a small number in this country to lose sight of the enormity of German offenses against American lives, in their excitement over British naval operations which affect the price of American cotton, can be readily understood even if it cannot be respected. No one beyond the

reach of this selfish motive, however, should be thoughtless enough to assume any relation of equality, or even of essential resemblance, between British naval interference with a small portion of our commerce and German submarine assaults upon the lives of our citizens. The right to shut off supplies from an enemy as a means of war has in itself always been admitted, as has the right to declare articles to be "contraband of war" under certain not very rigidly defined conditions. To subject these rights to the same sharp limitations which have been thrown around matters affecting non-combatant and neutral lives has in the nature of the case not been possible, and is perhaps not even theoretically desirable. "The theory of *contraband* is universally admitted; the application must vary more or less with circumstances which cannot be foreseen. The right to employ the blockade as a means of war is also admitted, with the qualification that it must be *effective.* Here again, exact definition is in the nature of the case impossible, as conditions vary infinitely with the geographical factors of the situation. If England has offended in this case, it has not been at all from a ruthless disregard of our rights, and a contempt for international law, but from going possibly a little too far in the loose construction of that law. And loose construction, whether in our own blockade operations during the Civil War or in our internal administration, has certainly never been considered a crime. England has gone to pains and expense never before paralleled in the history of warfare to protect American interests against loss through her blockade operations and her contraband orders, and in any case where she errs she stands ready to make the loss good when the claim shall have been proved through channels already existing. Under her blockade, our sea trade has rapidly reached an aggregate never before known. Germany, on the other hand, has ruthlessly slain between one and two hundred American citizens, going lawfully about their business, all of them non-combatants, many of them

women and children. This was no question whatever of a possibly allowable extension of any existing principle of international law, but a flat, brutal, and defiant refusal to be held by the plain mandates of that law. Neither is it an offence for which any amount of money can ever render a just satisfaction." [From letter of the present writer to *The Nation,* issue of January 27, 1916.]

It is hardly worth while to argue a moral question with anyone to whom the moral distinction between the two cases is not obvious and radical. Many good friends of the Wilson administration, however, feel that the Secretary of State inadvertently failed to realize the full meaning of that distinction in the much discussed note to Great Britain despatched some weeks after his accession to office. For as compared with the notes previously sent to Berlin, concerning the Lusitania outrage, the tone and wording of the note were of such a nature as easily to blur in the public consciousness, and as a matter of fact did so blur, the inherent moral distinction between the two cases. It is of course wholly desirable that our government should keep a close watch for any overstepping of the reasonable limits of British action in Great Britain's attempt to shut off the introduction of supplies into Germany, and have the record in shape for the securing of financial reparation wherever it can fairly be shown to be due. But to draw an accusation in terms so severe as to call forth unstinted praise from Bernhard Dernburg, the man whom popular sentiment and perhaps official suggestion sent from our country in protest against his shameless public defense of the Lusitania slaughter, was to lose sight of the fundamental moral relations of things and to stiffen Germany in her resistance to our just demands. It would be stupid to lose sight of the fact that it has all along been the plain policy of Berlin to dim the blood of American citizens slain by her law-defying submarines with the smoke of any friction which she can possibly stir up between us and Great

Britain. And the source of the money that moves the printing presses by which a great deal of this friction is stirred up is certainly no secret to anyone at this late date. It is very generally felt, too, that Secretary Lansing made a false step in his circular suggesting to the powers a change in existing international law concerning the defensive arming of merchant vessels. The antecedent possibility of securing a general agreement on such a matter while a great war was actually in progress was virtually nil, nor was it by any means certain that sober second though in this or any other of the great civilized countries would regard the proposed change as essentially desirable. It has been praised hastily by certain newspapers as a means of safeguarding human life on the seas; its one outstanding effect has been to stiffen the determination of the one power whose course has brought about a hitherto excluded danger to human life on the seas. And by the stiffening of that determination, the possibility of an armed clash between Germany and the United States, small though it may be with Wilson in the White House, was measurably increased. These one or two matters have given many grave concern lest Wilson himself should reverse his earlier policy and make concessions to the German position wholly inadmissible in the view of the bulk of his supporters, but the letter to Senator Stone has cleared away any reason for apprehension on that score. The American flag, representing in this case not American pride, or prestige, or selfishness, but the sacred rights of all neutrals, won by ages of struggle between a growing civilization and an expiring barbarism, will not be lowered unless it is torn from the President's hands and trailed in the dust by renegade Americans themselves. Unfortunately we have those among us possessing all the technical qualifications for congressional membership who would be capable even of that; but recent occurrences have shown that public opinion can be depended upon to make short work of any such attempt.

VIII. Diplomacy Abused and Dishonored

But the standing of Germany in American opinion has been harmed not alone by her fundamental assault upon the validity of international law, and her ruthlessness in slaying American citizens on the high seas as a mere incident of warfare with a third party. Her catalogue of offenses on our own soil is a long one, and of a much more serious nature than some of our people seem to realize. Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, has been a frequent offender against any admissible theory of diplomatic decency and propriety. The war had scarcely begun when he entered upon a vigorous campaign through the newspaper press to sway the current of public opinion to the side of Germany. It need hardly be said that this was wholly beyond the bounds of his legitimate activity. Years before, we had asked for the recall of a British ambassador not for an appeal to public opinion but for a mere expression of his own opinion in a private letter which happened to get into print, with regard to a pending election. Our request was reasonable and was of course granted, with no interruption to the friendly relations between this country and Great Britain. But Sackville-West's offense was the merest trifle in comparison with Bernstorff's newspaper campaign, and the governments of the whole world would have taken it as a mere matter of course if these initial offenses had been followed by prompt and explicit notice to Germany that the offender was no longer acceptable. On any matter that affects the relations of the two countries in any way, directly or indirectly, an ambassador has but one legitimate channel through which to work, and that is composed of the officer or officers in whose control the foreign relations of the country have been legally placed. When a diplomatic officer goes outside this channel, there is at once room to suspect that his motive is to bring outside pressure to bear upon the officials with whom he has to deal. That Bernstorff has been trying to do just this, from start to finish, is a mere

statement of fact evident to anyone who has followed the course of events. While the country owes an enormous debt to President Wilson's patience in many things, there is too much reason to believe that his tolerance of the indecent course of Bernstorff has been a serious mistake. On the first of May, 1915, the German embassy, with no consultation whatever with the President or Secretary of State, had advertisements inserted in newspapers all over the country advising American citizens not to take passage in ships flying the British flag. Here again was an offense against diplomatic decency which would have been very mildly punished by asking for his recall. These advertisements attracted little attention, because, as I have said before, the world was not yet aware that the German war lords had fallen far enough below the present standards of civilization to sink a great passenger ship without warning and with no provision for the safety of its passengers. In the first note to Germany after the sinking of the Lusitania, attention was called to the "surprising irregularity" of such advertisements issuing from the embassy without notice to our government, but if this surprising irregularity (outrageous indecency, in plain language) had been appropriately followed by a cabled request for Bernstorff's recall, by noon of the morning when the advertisements appeared, there would have been more than a gambling chance that the torpedoing of the Lusitania would never have occurred. Berlin would have been convinced that there was a point beyond which trifling with our honor could not go, and six days might have been sufficient to get into touch with the submarine officers assigned to the commission of that particular crime and cancel the bloody order with which they had been sent out. It is doubtful whether any country ever really consults the far reaching interests of peace and international comity by tolerating the continued presence of intentional offenders against diplomatic and consular propriety. Such offenses usually mean that

the country in which they are committed is being employed as a base of operations for some ulterior end, likely to produce friction with still other countries; and such is incontestably the case with the offenses committed by the German and Austrian embassies, attachés, and consular representatives. The sending home of Dumba, von Papen and Captain Boy-ed was all too light a penalty, and too long delayed to have the desired effect. The activities of some of these men have been incontestably proved to have been connected with a long series of outrageous crimes committed against American industries and American lives, in the interest of the German cause, while on the other hand these same men have been in intimate relation with Bernstorff himself and other direct representatives of the German government. That money has passed from the German government through the German embassy and on down into the hands of men now indelibly stained with participation in these crimes is shown by more than one line of evidence, as may be seen in the papers seized from von Papen at Falmouth. Let those who are practiced in exercising the philosopher's "will to believe" convince themselves if they can that the men at the top knew nothing of the criminal operations of some of the men who were handling this money at the bottom. Men at the top who would pass money down such a line without knowing precisely what use was to be made of it are not the men with whom we may with safety and self-respect conduct our relations with any foreign power whatever. We are today dealing with one of the two great Teutonic powers through a man whose name stands beneath a letter proposing the false and illegal use of American passports, involving the deceiving of our own officials and the risk of reputation for honest dealing with Great Britain, Russia, France and Italy, in order to get Austrian reservists home from this country. To an immediate request for his recall, when this letter was discovered, Austria could have penned no objection which she would not

have been ashamed to put upon the cables and allow the outside world to see. It must be remembered that the theory and practice of diplomacy have never admitted the right of any country to force upon another diplomatic or consular representatives not entirely satisfactory to the government to which they are assigned. The mere statement that a given representative is *persona non grata* is all that is required to bring about a change. Diplomatic propriety does not require a reason for the fact, though one may be given if thought desirable, and to demand the reason when not given would be a breach of diplomatic propriety. That the President has stopped so far short of his unquestionable rights under diplomatic propriety and usage in these cases is a great proof of his patience, but it must be taken as no indication of lack of friendship and respect for him to ask the question whether patience in this matter has not been proved by events to have been a mistake. In the delicate situation produced by the war and our own official neutrality, just two theories as to the matter in question were possible,—one that we should be unusually lenient with the representatives of belligerent powers on our soil; the other that we should insist from the outset upon the strictest observance by those representatives of every demand of diplomatic propriety. The first has been followed, and with what results? The continual disposition to take every advantage of that patience; the serious dulling of our own ideas as to what diplomatic decency really requires, through constant familiarity with its opposite; the keeping open of an easy channel of communication between one of the belligerent governments and agencies in this country whose activities have been at all times outrageously indecent and often still more outrageously criminal; the consequent engendering of bad feeling which must long interfere with a desirable cordiality of our relations with more than one European nation in the years to come; the hampering of our attempts to come to a settlement of our difficulties with Germany

over the Lusitania matter, and the increased muddling of right ideas as to allegiance and patriotism among our foreign-born citizens. It would not be fair to abuse the President for not foreseeing all this. Who of us were sufficiently prepared beforehand for the many turns which events have taken since this war began? But it is certainly our duty to learn from experience, and is it not evident from experience that it would have been better to have insisted from the start upon the other theory, that the very delicacy of the situation required the most scrupulous regard for every demand of diplomatic propriety? Is it not altogether probable that the Central powers, faced early in the war with the necessity of recalling their ambassadors and a large list of men in lower positions, for offenses known to the whole world, would have conceived a far higher respect for America, and through her for all neutral powers? And would not that respect have produced a radical modification in her methods of carrying on the war, eliminating that feature of ruthless disregard for neutral lives and international obligations which has sown seeds of untold bitterness throughout the world and will react as a curse upon Germany herself for generations to come? It would be ungenerous not to say, in this connection, that the diplomatic and consular service of the Allies with almost no exception—none at all involving any high official—has been voluntarily kept within the bounds of entire propriety. The past cannot be recalled; but it is not too late now to insist that the honor and dignity of this country and the decencies of diplomatic usage must be respected by any who are to continue in diplomatic or consular service within our borders.

IX. German Contempt for American Intelligence

To neutral countries a very irritating phase of the war has been Germany's persistent underrating of their intelligence, her persistent assumption that they could be led to accept statements wholly out of accord with facts open to all, and logic so faulty as hardly to deceive

an intelligent child, much less an educated and intelligent man. The flourish of documents rifled from the public archives of Belgium is a case in point, with the claim that they proved Belgium guilty of betraying her own neutrality long before the war began, when any careful reader could see at once that they convicted Belgium of no impropriety whatever, but merely of sufficient foresight to suspect the crime which Germany was so soon to commit against her and make some provision for protection when the assault should come. Still another case is the attitude of both Germany and Austria towards the sale of war munitions, trying by the flimsiest arguments imaginable to persuade this government to stop such sales to the Allies, and at the same time avoiding with the most scrupulous care any statement by which they themselves would have been bound not to purchase munitions wherever they could, if at any time they should get access to the seas. And more recently comes the plea to us to insist that English merchant vessels shall not carry defensive guns of calibre large enough to destroy a submarine, on the ground that this transforms them into vessels of offense! And this from the country that is even yet reiterating to weary ears the statement that the inroads into Belgium and France with which the war was opened were purely *defensive!* The mission of Bernhard Dernburg to this country is another illustration, a man contemptuous enough of American intelligence to attempt to persuade a public audience in a great American city that the slaughter of over a hundred of our citizens on the Lusitania, as a mere incident of war against England, was entirely justifiable. And it was Ambassador Bernstorff who tried to quiet American resentment at the dropping of bombs from Zeppelins among the women and children of Antwerp with the published statement that Antwerp is a fortified city and that the civilian population should have left before the attack, as if the evacuation of a city of several hundred thousands of inhabitants in so short a time were even a

human possibility. Why all these insults to ordinary human intelligence, unless it be true that the country from which they emanate has become so inordinately proud of its peculiar "kultur" as actually to suppose that no other type of civilization is really worthy of respect? In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the great German papers, the *Hamburger Nachrichten,* has just recently declared that the German race, now estimated at 100,000,000 both at home and abroad, are destined to "reorganize" the whole world on the German model. Can there be any surprise outside of Germany itself that the dominant world sentiment desires the defeat of a power possessing so little appreciation of the rights, the feelings and the civilization of others? No nation on earth can assume that attitude and retain or deserve the respect of the world at large. It is the "hubris" of the old Greeks, that wanton insolence of temper upon which the fates cannot fail to bring a fitting penalty.

X. Misguided German-American Sentiment

The development of German-American opinion in this country has been a tragedy of unwise and disloyal leadership, the acme of unwisdom for the German-Americans themselves and disloyal not only to the land of their adoption but also to the only kind of interests of their former home which they, as citizens under oath of allegiance to this country, have any right to promote. I do not mean by this to express the belief that in the event of war between the two countries the great majority of our German-American citizens would not give their aid at once to the land of their adoption; but the bad seed sown by such men as Hexamer and Viereck would inevitably lead many to their ruin. One of the most disturbing features of the situation is the apparent policy of the German government itself to retain a hold upon its former subjects who have taken the oath of allegiance to us. This is an intolerable situation, and is bound to receive the most serious attention after the war is over. It ought to be apparent without argument

that if any foreign nation persists in an attempt to keep its hand upon duly admitted citizens of this country we could not in safety continue to extend the right of naturalization to its subjects, and might conceivably be forced to withdraw it even from those to whom it had already been given.

True wisdom would have led German-Americans wholly to the American side in the matters which have produced friction between the two countries. They are far enough removed from the center of the war to see that Germany has absolutely nothing to gain from the features of her warfare to which we have objected. The use of her submarines as commerce destroyers in a manner outside the pale of law and contrary to the dictates of modern humane feeling has not brought her armies one mile nearer to their goal on any front; it has not prevented the introduction of unprecedented quantities of supplies of all kinds into the ports of the Allies; it has not destroyed an amount of Allied tonnage anywhere near equal to the new that has been launched during the same period, and has not made it possible for her own navy to appear upon the open seas. And what has it done? It has destroyed a number of vessels of no material consequence in comparison to those that have passed unscathed; it has sunk an amount of food and ammunition wholly negligible in comparison with that which it has been unable to touch; and this paltry task it has accomplished at the cost of strengthening all over the world the feeling that the domination of Prussian militarism over Europe through success in the present war would be an enormous world disaster. Genuine American sentiment could of course have no sympathy with such a policy, and if German-Americans had shown themselves wholly Americans on this point the policy of Germany towards America might have been greatly altered. This might not have brought Germany appreciably nearer to success in the war, but it would have had no appreciable influence towards her failure, and would unquestionably have saved her from much of the world-wide ill-feeling which is destined so seriously to retard her recovery

XI. Two Kinds of Efficiency

Efficiency! The word has a taking sound for these latter days, but after all it is strictly a matter of its application. We like the "men who do things" as a rule, but if the things in question ought not to be done, the man who resists may after all be accomplishing more for humanity and progress. The efficiency that conserves the forests, the fertilizing materials, the mineral resources and the food products of Germany more effectively than is done in most other countries, is good in itself and may well give a lesson to the world outside. But it is an essentially material blessing after all, and like other material blessings may easily be transformed into a curse. And this is just what has happened to the Germany of today. United into a great empire, physically enriched with the fruits of industrial efficiency, the German people have listened too willingly to the seductive teachings of men who have seen in this efficiency a promising pathway to world dominion. Hence German efficiency has been bent predominantly to the task of preparing for such dominion, and a military machine has been built up which may readily be admitted to surpass anything of the kind that the world has ever seen. If the "efficient" work of that machine during the past twenty months,—its rape of Belgium, its toll of submarine murders, its mangled bodies of women and children slaughtered by Zeppelin bombs from the air, its smoking ruins of historic monuments of art, science, philanthropy and religion—if all this could have been definitely held up to the German masses as a deliberate programme of action twenty years ago, they would have recoiled from it with horror and consigned its proposers to lasting infamy. But little by little, only vaguely or not at all conscious of the direction in which they were led, they have been brought to the point where humaner feelings and higher ideals could be submerged, and where it has been possible to secure their plaudits for such uses of their "efficiency" as have shocked and dismayed the

civilized world outside their own boundaries. To those who view the matter from without, the ruins of churches, of hospitals, of the Louvain Library, and other places and objects held sacred from the ravages of war by all right-thinking men, picture not so vividly the crushing outward power of German "efficiency" as its blighting inward devastation of the noblest traits of the German spirit itself, when actuated by ideals out of harmony with the upward trend of liberty and humanity.

But modern times have seen the birth of another type of efficiency, and that is the efficiency of an informed and inspired public opinion. Before its forces many an evil has already fallen and more are destined to fall in years to come. And before this higher efficiency the mechanical efficiency of the German war machine is doomed to fall. It is because the Allies have a cause which appeals to the sound moral judgment of all their own right-thinking men that France and England and Russia, all more or less distracted by local differences when the war began, have been able to put aside all else and settle down to the present task with an unbroken determination to bring it to a successful end and an unwavering belief that no other outcome is possible. And the knowledge that this belief in the moral soundness of their cause is shared by the dominant opinion of the neutral world has been worth more to them on the actual field of battle than a million additional men could have been, had world opinion been adverse.

And the moral gain to those who firmly hold sound moral opinion in such a crisis is great. It is difficult, however, to keep a firm grip upon a moral opinion which one does not take the trouble on due occasions to express. I cannot but believe that this country would have been greatly the gainer, morally, by an official expression, prompt and emphatic, of its condemnation of the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. Such an expression could not honestly have been construed as

inconsistent with our own neutrality in the European war, for that violation in its very nature transcended the limits of that war and constituted a serious threat to the interests of every nation on earth concerned for the validity of international engagements. The lack of some such centralized expression has been in part responsible for an apparent languishing of interest which has led Germany and perhaps other lands into a misconception as to what the fundamental American opinion really is. In the same editorial of the *Independent* from which quotation was made on the first page, the editor goes on to say: "Today, it is obvious to everybody that public opinion in the United States verges upon a state of intellectual and moral anarchy." When those words were written, men prominent in Congress were beginning to talk about the probability that a resolution would be passed warning American citizens not to exercise their traditional right to take passage on merchant vessels of belligerent owner-ship, thus overruling the President in the contest with Germany begun by the lawless slaughter of Americans on the Lusitania, and openly surrendering to German threats one of the hard won principles of modern liberty and humanity. Resolutions specifically making that base surrender were introduced into both House and Senate, and official Germany was becoming convinced that the pro-German propaganda, assiduously pushed through so many channels both on the surface and under the surface, had definitely placed Congress on the pro-German side, rendering the President powerless to defend the rights which he was interested in destroying. That so many congressmen gave plausibility to that view will go down in history as one of the most disgraceful episodes in the annals of the American Congress. But neither the fear of German-American votes nor the still more forbidding influences which were at work had altered genuine American opinion. By the President's demand that Congress should specifically declare itself and no longer paralyze his arm by vague talk of

division, and especially by his ringing open letter to Senator Stone, American sentiment was once more awakened and made vocal, and the world was permitted to see just how little honest backing lay behind the cowardly proposals of betrayal which Senator Gore and Congressman McLemore had foolishly fathered. The incident as a whole perhaps did some good, in showing the ugly nature of some of the influences at work upon our congressmen and the defective character of some of the material which we have exposed to such influences, through lack of discrimination in our congressional elections. But it is an incident such as we cannot afford to see repeated. The true American sentiment must be kept alive and active, not only to guard our interests immediately imperilled, but to do our part towards human progress when the war shall end, as it will end, in Germany's defeat. International law needs some rewriting—Germany is correct so far—but a rewriting such as shall put every possible human safeguard in the way of a repetition of the violation of a neutral state because it is physically weak; a rewriting which shall more firmly secure, not annul, all existing protection to the lives of travelers on the high seas in time of war; a rewriting which shall subject every new death-dealing invention of warfare, such as the Zeppelin and the submarine, to all restrictions heretofore devised in the interest of humanity, and still more where possible. It is to its normal part in this task that American opinion, in harmony with the best opinion throughout the world, must be led. And the suicide of a German "efficiency" prostituted to the ends of Prussian militarism will be followed by the birth of a new Germany just as eager to see those changes as is the rest of the world. It is in that direction alone that material can be found with which to lay the foundations of a durable and endurable peace. The "peace" to which Mr. Bryan and his happily diminished following would lead us, through cowardly surrender of principles of justice and liberty won in the age-long struggle of right against wrong,—such a peace, could be neither durable nor endurable.

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